1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF16 SW China
[redacted] AF16

177 There are other factors which give to
311 much of the area we are now considering
563 important uniformities in culture. The expansion of "Chinese culture" from Honan and Shantung into the whole of south and southwest China was essentially the steady outward push of an efficient agricultural technique which displaced the more primitive aboriginal food-gatherers and primitive slash-burn agriculturists, absorbed most of these people into its operation, and drove the remnants higher and higher into the hills. This process is still going on in upland areas of the South-
241 west. The characteristically Chinese agri-
621 culture is intensive, that is, it uses large quantities of human labor in irrigating, fertilizing, and cultivating land for maximum yields. Its unit of socio-economic organization is the village, composed of those families which cultivate the surrounding fields within
621 easy walking distance. It was in the villages of rural China, spread over a vast area to exploit the land through a common technology, that the characteristic way of life developed. It is his family's village which is "home" to any Chinese, no matter what his class, how far he may wander, or how Westernized his life may have become. There are perpetuated the ties with his own family's past, symbolized by the ancestral temple and the family or clan burial ground. There are the other families

•62 with which his own has built an enduring pattern of reciprocal favors and obligations. It is in the farming villages that the Communists are seeking to bring about fundamental changes in the way of life and to break up the old complex of family and local loyalties.

What are the patterns of village life common to the old settled Szechwan plain and the more recently colonized areas of the Southwest? We shall sketch these before discussing the variations represented by urban life.

A. The Pattern of Village Life

423 241 First of all, life in the farming village is meager. In Szechwan in 1946 the average farm was 3.9 acres, and the average square mile provided food for 650 people. In Kweichow the average farm was 3.2 acres, 241 in Yunnan 3.1. [1] Farm families save everything; fecal matter and refuse go into a pit

161 1. George B. Cressey, Land of the 500 Million: A Geography of China, New York, 1955, pp. 105, 178. The richest part of Szechwan, the Chengtu plain, has a population density of 2,300 people per square mile. Ibid., 241 p. 178. As we consider the pattern of agricultural life in the Southwest, the following data on the nature and distribution of farming throughout the area should be kept

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNITY

The Locality

West Town is within a day's journey on foot or horseback from Hsiakuan, the nearest point on the Burma Road. It has Er Hai (a lake) to one side and Ta'ang Shan, a mountain about 14,000 feet above sea level, to the other side. The general level of the ground in this part is about 6,700 feet above sea level. The chief occupation of the area is agriculture, rice being the staple crop. But trading in various forms is common both as a subsidiary and as the chief occupation. The trading includes both local exchanges in various markets and large-scale commercial adventures into the outer world. West Town is built on this peculiar form of commercialism.(3)

The locality is a small village or town, being under the jurisdiction of the district government of Tali. It has a population of about 1,000 households and about 8,000 people. Shops are not numerous, mostly groceries, cloth stores and a few food shops. There are a few native dispensaries and one apparently modern dispensary. The chief markets of exchange are the periodic fairs which take place both in and near the town.

The town is not walled. Some years ago four gates were erected which shut the town from the outlying villages at the ends of the two main thoroughfares of the town, which cross each other. At night the streets are patroled by a town-hired watchman. But the population of the town is not only confined to within these gates. Near the town are at least nine more or less clearly marked out-clusters of houses, each of which has a name as a village. Within the four gates, each street, or each section of a street, is also called a village.

People and Culture

The town with its nine near-by and several more distant villages is under the authority of a Chen-Chang (head of a sub-district) appointed by and under the direction of the governor of the district (Hsien Chang) of Tali. A small police force, supported by the town, maintains law and order. Generally speaking, the town and its satellite villages is one of the Min Chia colonies in Yunnan. But all inhabitants in the town and in all the nine near-by villages except one insists on their Chinese origin, and will be seriously offended if suggestions to the contrary are made to them. This controversial point is not the concern of this paper. It suffices here to observe that all except the inhabitants in that one village who profess to be Min Chias bind their women's feet and wear Chinese dress. But all speak Min Chia as their mother-tongue. Most men and a few women, however, speak Chinese (with a strong local accent) as well. Here the social differences between men and women is carried to its extreme. Virginity of unmarried women and chastity of married women are heavily guarded and valued. Women work while men enjoy light conversation over a cup of tea or beside a tray with an opium-smoking pipe.

(3) For a general description of the Tali area (the geographical conditions of Tali and its environs) the reader may look up C.P. Fitzgerald, The Tower of Five Glories, London, 1941. As a serious scientific effort the book is a hotchpotch of hearsay and observation which disgraces rather than deserves the name of ethnology. This will be dealt with elsewhere in extenso.